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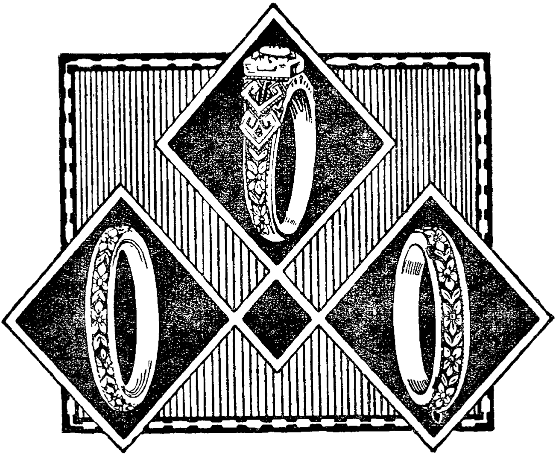

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The Vedanta Kesari

VOLUME XXXII NUMBER 6

OCTOBER, 1945

PEARLS OF WISDOM

देव्या यया ततमिदं चगदात्म शक्त्या
निश्शेषदेवगणशक्तिसमूह मूर्त्या ।
तामम्बिकामखिलदेव महर्षिपूज्यां
भक्त्या नताः स्म विदधातु शुभानि सा नः ॥

With deep reverence and love we prostrate ourselves at the feet of the Universal Divine Mother who sustains the world ensouling it with Her Self-Power, who is the sum total of the powers of all the Gods and who is worthy to be worshipped by all gods and sages. May she vouchsafe to us every good!

—*Markandeyapurana*

The gopis worshipped Katyayani in order to be united with Sri Krishna. Everyone is under the authority of the Divine Mother, Mahamaya, the Primal Energy. Even the Incarnations of God accept the help of Maya to fulfil their mission on earth. Therefore they worship the Primal Energy. Don't you see how bitterly Rama wept for Sita? 'Brahman weeps, ensnared in the meshes of maya.'

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLE

A forest scene. A youth of princely bearing comes running to a man of rishi-like countenance seated under a tree.

Disciple: [Gasping and with exasperated looks] Gurujee, you promised to make me the ace archer in the world and now—

Guru: [Unperturbed by the fright of the boy] And now—what happened?

Disciple: [In a stern undertone] What happened. It is an insult to you if your disciple is insulted like this: I was chasing a deer and the deer at last took refuge in a Saravyooha (enclosure protected by arrows) of a hunter boy and I could do nothing.

Guru: Is it? [exhibiting a little curiosity rather than anxiety] Well, I would like to see that boy then—

Both start and come to the hunter boy's place. The hunter youth hearing about the distinguished visitors comes out and receives them. To his utter surprise and joy the youth finds that the old man is his 'Guru'. He prostrates at the Guru's feet and requests him to come in.

Second Disciple: Gurujee, [The royal disciple is stung by the words and stares at the Guru with the unuttered question whether he is in unholy alliance against the first disciple] Blessed is this day for me. You come to me as God Himself.

Guru: [with loving tenderness] Dear boy, how is it that I am your Guru; I don't remember to have seen you at all.

Second Disciple: Revered Sire, to protect the harmless deer of this forest from tigers and lions and from the royal pleasure-hunts, I wanted to learn archery under you. Five years ago I approached you requesting to be accepted as your pupil. But as your Guruship was monopolised by your royal pupils I couldn't be accepted. Undaunted I came back, installed your image in a safe and sacred place and began to practise archery before its presence. And to-day I am what I am.

The eyes of the Guru and the first disciple met and spoke a wordless language which each could understand and which was embarassing to both. In love and sweet surprise the Guru's eyes went forth to his new *manasaputra* (spiritual son), prince among disciples. But soon the Guru's face gave way to depression and the gloom of helplessness, for he could'nt find a way to redeem his word to his prince—pupil to make him the archer-ace.

o o o

The hunter-youth comes to know the helpless position of his Guru and decides to fulfil his promise at great sacrifice to himself.

Hunter disciple: Gurujee, why did'nt you tell me about it? I am here to redeem your promise. [He disappears and in a trice comes back. In his bleeding right palm is his severed right thumb, the saviour of the deer. He places his thumb at the feet of his Guru and prostrates.]

Hunter-disciple: Gurujee, this is my humble Gurudakshina. I am happy that your promise to your royal disciple to make him the first archer is a truth today. [The prince—pupil looks on with smacking satisfaction.]

Howlings of agony of the deer are then heard. The hunter youth hears them and with consternation puts his thumbless palm on his chest with the words:

Oh, they upbraid me for my thoughtless sacrifice, for my Gurubhakti. Have I disowned you so that, that haughty prince may become the ace-archer? No, I have sacrificed you on the altar of my Gurubhakti, to fulfil my Guru's word—Still am I right?

Here is a colourful page from the history of old Guru-disciple life in India, unfortunately with a mischievously modern sting at the end. That halo of self-giving efficiency to bestow in abundance on his pupil, skill and the

spiritual virtues of love and service of creation so typical of old Gurus is round this Guru. He has given both skill and spirituality to his second disciple, though *in absentia*; but grafted skill alone with its attendant ambition and arrogance on his royal pupil. And the result was that the second had to practise self-denial even suicidally, and pour himself out so that the cup of the first disciple's ambition may be full to the brim. This is more a modern calamity. In days of old our ancients taught—and we practised—that skill should kneel and do homage before spirituality, before religion. We were asked to subjugate the Rajas in us, our active part, our scientific skill, so that the Sattva (religion) and Santi its sequel may predominate and we be at peace. But today the picture is reversed.

Be that as it may, two facts emerge from the above episode: the two Great Facts in all education and all religion, the great Guru and the great Sishya. Education as also religion must begin with a Godly Guru and must end with a Guru-like Sishya. From such education has flowed down to us the great Upanishads, the Gita, the Apaurusheya wisdom that does not lean on personalities. If present day education does not begin with a godly Guru, the fault is not the Guru's: a godly Guru is an anachronism today; he is not wanted. A mediocre individual who knows just the prescribed portion and nothing more makes the best teacher. Again if modern education does not end with a great Sishya the fault is not the Sishya's; for all that is wanted of him is to pass his examination. The teacher need not, rather cannot, take any special interest in his disciples, for the teachers are legion. Because the subjects are also legion. And so each teacher thinks his responsibility over when he has attended to a part of the student. The inevitable result is that the student is cut up into fragments. Though he learns something of everything he never gains a total vision of himself; he is an amalgam of many bits. It is this fragmentation of the student that has made him incapable of defining his ideal: today a *student does not know what he wants*. He wants everything which means that he will achieve nothing. Who is there to see through him and see to his real wants and discourage his unreal wants?

'One must live one's whole life by the side of one who is like a blazing fire and then he will not take a false step.' Sri Ramakrishna used to say to his disciples. If this is a necessity in religion, it is more so in education. Against the blazing fire that is the teacher the student stands transparent and the teacher can *see* and give according to capacity. Sri Ramakrishna himself was a blazing fire and so he could say to his disciples as he often used to. 'Well, my dear boy, I can see through you as I see through a glass house.' That is the teacher. But to enable the teacher to fulfill his part well, to *know* his disciple and give, the disciple must not be stiff. He must be supple, obedient, receptive and surrendering: तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया The Guru must be approached in an attitude of homage, enquiry and service.

Let us not miss the fundamental fact in all education and religion that the Guru-sishya continuum—which in fact is the whole of education and religion—is a flow from a higher level to a lower perfectible level. The wind bloweth where it listeth. And so the guru must have enough to give. He must be a man of remarkable eminence, a reservoir of knowledge, strength and peace. That itself will inspire confidence in the pupil, and prepare in him a receptive and reverential attitude so necessary for the transmission of knowledge. Before such an eminence obedience and respect become spontaneous and come unsought for. If the Hindu ancients are insistent on the necessity of a guru for self-realization and assure us with the words, आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद, the man with a guru knows the supreme, they are equally insistent that the guru must be a *Tatva darshi*, one with the

vision of Truth, who has received the *adesha*, the command from above to teach.

Nevertheless, there are moments when the unswerving Advaitic genius of Indian wisdom comes and whispers to us the secret that we are our own guru, that there is no guru outside us. The God-guru conception of our ancients says that God is the *adi-guru*, the primeval teacher, the *sanatana-guru*, the eternal teacher, that guru is the ultimate Reality itself, गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म. Is this not sufficiently strong to convince us about the immanence of our guru in ourselves? Yes, it is enough if we recognise the higher self in us as our guru and adore him by our uncompromising bhakti to him. That is the whole of religion.

Instances are legion in our traditional lore as that of our hunter youth given above, to illustrate this Advaita of Guru-sishya bandha. A look, a touch, a word or a suggestion and the pupil blossoms into fulness in his own autonomy evidently without the physical presence and ministrations of the guru. Is it all self-effort? Is there no need for Guru's grace? An interesting parallel to the old problem: Self-effort *versus* Divine Grace. Consistent with our ancient preference for the strength-giving gospel of Advaita as also with our modern thirst for freedom and love of self-sufficiency we come to this conclusion: It is all self-effort. If it is said that our self-effort in a good direction has been gained by an act of Divine grace, we say that that act of Divine will itself was made possible in us by our chastened and spiritual self-effort. There is no higher religion than realising oneself as the God, the Supreme and the Sublime, the one and only Guru and to this religion self-effort nourished by Self-confidence is the only sure and speedy path.

All the same we cannot blink the harmful effects of carrying the gospel of self-effort too far by our present generation. Both the student and the aspirant of the times say glibly that education and religion are after all a matter of transmission and that one need not worry about the Guru-sishya continuum. The student of today thinks that he can get all knowledge by himself from books and if he attends the class it is only for attendance. The religious aspirants of today hold that all that they want for their *sadhana* they find in books and that the guru's presence is not a necessity! If they argue this on the strength of instances of sishyas on whom knowledge dawned with no more physical presence of the guru than a word, a look or a suggestion, let them not forget that such sishyas were rare geniuses with their fertile field waiting for the vision of the guru. All are not geniuses, though all wish to be so, as all would like to escape the hard uphill work of learning and acquiring. To-day every other man thinks that he is a guru; every other man thinks he is a genius. And they can hoodwink the world by a show of knowledge or realization, for they have easy access to the highest knowledge in books. Thus knowledge has turned out to be a dangerous weapon in the unripe, unworthy hands of these psuedo-gurus of the day, adding thereby one more to the already alarming length of hurdles in the path of sincere souls. The direct effect of this on the life of the individual has been the falling in the spiritual standards. The holy wall that separated the spiritual from the secular has been smashed to atoms and so a thing is spiritual or secular according to convenience and expediency. There has been a vulgar oversimplification as the one we find in the great poem 'Brahma': 'Cricket is God; ball is God; the hit is God'......Even the converse is true: God is cricket......God is cinema.

So then if the present-day student or aspirant is not inspired by the traditional doctrines of obedient and surrendering discipleship, the blame is not entirely his. How can the four walls of the school or the monastery guard him from the corrosive Fascist and Communist influences outside?

If social conduct, politics and even religion have changed in their effort to accommodate these currents and cross-currents, how can

we expect the old Guru-sishya institution to remain unchanged. Education in its early days both in the East and the West was synonymous with discipline; it was the necessary preparation for all walks of life for all men. 'Discipline' is instruction—that which belongs to the *discipulus* or scholar.[1] And discipline meant a three-fold rigour, discipline of the intellect by intense study and meditation, discipline of the will by contemplation, concentration and discrimination, and discipline of the emotions by three-fold Brahmacharya. In these aspects education in ancient India was fully spiritual. But since then education has travelled far into a country of sordid utility, conscription and regimentation. Education in the West and following it in the East is a preparation for war. So the modern pupil naturally wants something less orthodox and more original than the same old doctrine of obedience to the Guru.

Another reason for the student's fall of faith in the necessity of the Guru and reverence to him is the fall in the stature of the personality of the Guru. Our ancients knew that if reverence and obedience are to be spontaneous to the Guru from the disciple, the former must be a giant in every respect and not dwarfs like the present-day teachers. There are many texts which insist on godly qualities in the Guru. One text lays down: He must be a man of high birth, with love and compassion for all beings, He must have faith in God and his ornaments must be scholarship, powers of expression and explanation of great truths. In knowledge, he must be as wide, and in patience and forbearance he must be as steady as mother-earth. In dignity he must be like a mountain. He must be as impartial as a balance, and must be smiling when teaching. Only such a guru will be respected by all and put on the head as a flower.

Let us not miss the wisdom of ages and think of applying the chisel of modernization to this doctrine of reverence of and obedience to, the Guru, in our anxiety for originality. The respect a spiritual aspirant gives to his Guru is only the respect of the traditions the latter embodies and so obedience to him is a self-sanctioned necessity. When an individual enters a religious organization, he virtually enters into a 'spiritual contract' with his superiors who are to transfer to him the wealth of traditions they enshrine. The aspirant cannot hope to make such riches his own without an all-out obedience to those traditional rules and regulations of the Order. It is the love and aspiration for such riches that has brought him into the Order. And so obedience to the guru in so far as he is the living commentary on the rules and traditions of the Order is really obedience to the call from within the aspirant to share in the wider spiritual life. Hence obedience to the Guru far from being a choking of individual freedom and choice, as it is often misunderstood, is in fact the answer to the call of our higher self for a greater prize, is really the path of self-unfoldment and self-fulfilment. Here the aspirant is doubly responsive: to the call of his inner being to join in a wider spiritual life that the Order affords, and to the demands of the organization through his Guru, both responses being mutually complementary and supplementary.

For the Guru-sishya continuum to be healthy and fruitful, while respect, reverence and obedience are demanded of the pupil, the award to him of a certain amount of freedom is a basic necessity. In spiritual life the critical faculty is at its height. For without the maximum exercise of that faculty no renunciation can be honest and firmly based. Again spiritual life is one of creative activity. When *sattva* predominates it must lead to fruitful creativity. So to give scope for the creative and critical faculties and thus save spiritual life from dryness and frustration the award of freedom to proceed along one's natural bent, *swadharma*, is a legitimate demand of the aspirant and must be granted.

The Guru-sishya continuum is a fundamental fact of our lives, an eternal necessity

[1] Hastings: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*

with us. For it means an unremitting call to study, meditation, concentration, vigilance—in short, obedience to the demands of the higher values immanent in us, to the love of the spiritual. As long as I live, I learn, said Sri Ramakrishna.

We have the Guru in everyone of us—our higher selves—the nucleus of our love for the Mores in life, love for the *not ourselves* which makes for righteousness. We have the sishya in us, asking the eternal question, how have we bettered our yesterday's best. That we may be complete and peaceful personalities, we have to establish a loving co-operation between these two halves in us, we have to achieve the harmonious philosophy of the half and half. We know that much of our happiness in life depends on how we react to the demands of the better and the nobler in us. We cannot entirely ignore the higher in us, nor will we be happy in a pig philosophy of the flesh. Each one of us has to find and fix his golden mean between the higher and the lower, to realise the *samatva*, which in fact is the goal of all religions. And until the *samatva* is reached the pointer of the balance is shifting and unsteady. So let us not be lulled into the complascence that our battles are over and that we can lie on our oars. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. Unremitting alertness is the main offering to the God of Achievement.

He who knows how to find an instructor for
himself arrives at the supreme mastery.

He who loves to ask, extends knowledge......

But who ever considers his personal opinion,
becomes constantly narrower than he was.

SRI KRISHNA AND THE MESSAGE OF LOVE*

By Prof. D. S. Sarma, M.A.

A well-known verse compares the Upanishadic texts to cows, Krishna to a milkman and the Gita to milk. Continuing this figure we may say that there was one cow, with plenty of milk in her udders, which escaped being milked at the time of the Gita and which was milked later at the time of the *Bhagavata.* Or in unfigurative language we may say that there is in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* a famous text whose implications do not come within the scope of the *Bhagavad Gita* but are fully illustrated in the *Bhagavata Purana.* The text is as follows:—

न वा अरे पत्युः कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति, न वा अरे जायायै कामाय जाया प्रिया भवति आत्मनस्तु कामाय जाया प्रिया भवति.........
आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः ॥

'It is not for the love of the husband that the husband is dear, but it is for the love of the Atman that the husband is dear.

'It is not for the love of the wife that the wife is dear, but it is for the Atman that the wife is dear.

'It is the Atman that has to be seen, heard, understood and meditated upon.'

The great sage Yagnavalkya on the eve of his retirement to the forest gives this *upadesa* to his wife Maitreyi. He teaches that the mutual love between the husband and the wife should not be an end in itself, but that it should be made the means to the end of self-realisation or the realisation of God. If in the mantras quoted above the word Bhagavan is substituted for Atma they would exactly express the feelings of the Gopis for Krishna. That the attraction which the finite soul feels for the Infinite till its

* Based on the lecture delivered at Sri Krishna Jayanti celebrations on 2nd September 1945 at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore.

finitude is transcended should be expressed in terms of human love—is the burden of all subsequent Krishna literature.

Our sources of information for the life and teachings of Krishna are (1) The *Mahabharata* (2) The *Harivamsa* (3) The *Vishnu Purana* (4) The *Bhagavata Purana* and (5) The post-Bhagavata Literature.

The earliest mention of Krishna, the son of Devaki, is contained in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, where he is described as the pupil of one Ghora Angirasa, from whom he is said to have learnt that the real sacrifice is the life of man himself—a lesson strikingly similar to that taught in the Gita. The next mention of Krishna is in Panini, who refers to Vasudeva and Arjuna as objects of worship. But these are only bare mentions. Our earliest source of information for Krishna's life is the *Mahabharata* itself. But here it is only his later life that is given —not his early life with the Gopis at Brindavan. For this we have to go to *Harivamsa* and *Vishnu Purana*. The information contained in these two books is greatly expanded and treated with marvellous power and beauty in the famous tenth Skandha of the *Bhagavata Purana*. The *Bhagavata Purana* subsequently gave rise to five systems of theology in which Krishna is the central object of worship—those of Madhva, Vishnuswami, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya—not to speak of the innumerable songs, poems and dramas in the various vernaculars of India.

Now let us look for a moment at the probable dates of these sources of information.

(1) The *Chandogya Upanishad*—6th century. B. C.

(2) Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*—4th century B. C.

(3) The *Mahabharata* (as we have it now)—2nd century B. C

(4) The *Harivamsa* and ths *Vishnu Purana* —4th century A. D.

(5) The *Bhagavata Purana*—9th century A. D.

(6) Chaitanya—16th century A. D.

It will be seen that it is a far cry from the *Chandogya* to Chaitanya. The religion of love centering round Krishna went on developing for more than twenty centuries. Even if we take the *Bhagavata Purana* as the lower limit and the *Mahabharata* as the upper limit, we have, if we regard the dates assigned by Western scholars as correct, a wide gulf of eleven centuries dividing the two sources of information. When the life of a hero who is mentioned in a work dated 6th century B. C. comes to be fully written only in the 9th century A. D. that is, 1,500 years after he lived and died what hope is there of finding only historical truth in such a 'biography'? The fact is that the authors of these famous scriptures never meant to give us history, they meant to teach us religion. Their aim was not historical accuracy, but something far higher *viz.* poetic truth or spiritual truth. At the same time it is not correct to say that their books are books of fiction for they have, as their bases some undoubted historical characters and some historical incidents. The proper designation for them perhaps is 'historical parables.' Just as in an historical drama or an historical novel the author takes historical incidents and characters and suitably modifies them for his own purpose and even adds to them or omits from them certain things necessary for the object he has in view so also do these authors of what may be called historical parables. Their object is to give expression to some phases of universal religious experience, and this they do through the historical materials that came to their hands. For instance, how often have we not felt when reading the Rasa-Krida chapters in the *Bhagavata* that the poet is describing our own intense love for the lord in moments of rapt prayer and devotion, rather than that of the cowherd girls of a far-off province in a far-off age? No. Our Puranas are not historical chronicles, they are historical parables. They don't give historical truth, but universal religious truth.

The way in which the religion of love centering round Krishna had developed in

the early stages is best illustrated by the history of Radha in the later stages of the same development. Radha is not mentioned in the *Bhagavata*. All that the *Bhagavata* says is that among the Gopis there was one who was a favourite of Krishna and that he wandered in the forest along with her, thus rousing the jealousy of the other Gopis. This favourite gets a name—Radha—and remains only a favourite in the works of Vishnuswami and Jayadeva and in the Krishna Upanishads. But in Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya she becomes the wedded wife, the eternal spouse, of Krishna. And finally we are told that in the sect called the Radha-Vallabhi sect, which was considerably influenced by Saktism, and which was founded at the end of the 16th century by Harivamsa, Radha becomes the Queen of the world and Krishna only her agent. When in the broad light of history, before our own eyes, as it were, a legend like that of Radha could grow, we can imagine how the tradition regarding Krishna grew up in those dim pre-historic centuries before the Christian era.

It is interesting to note that the religious stream of Bhakti centering round Krishna, which begins with the *Bhagavad Gita* and passes through the Alvars of Southern India, through the works of Ramanuja, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the system of Madhva splits itself into two in later Middle Ages. One branch which flowed over the Maharashtra centred round Krishna and Rukmini. The saints of Maharashtra sing of the wedded love of Krishna and Rukmini in their glorification of Vittobha of Pandharpur. The other branch which flowed over Northern India and extended from Gujrat to Bengal centered round the romantic love of Krishna and Radha. The poems of Chandidas, Vidyapati, Mirabai, Narsing Mehta and the innumerable minor poets in the various vernaculars of Northern India derive their inspiration from the Radha-Krishna cult.

What is the spiritual experience which all these schools of philosophy and poetry express? It is simply the soul's hunger for the Infinite represented as a person. This hunger is interpreted in terms of human love. In this symbolism the soul is represented as a woman and the Infinite as a man. The question is whether wedded love, the love between husband and wife, best represents the soul's longing for God or romantic love, the love between the lover and the beloved best represents it. In wedded love there is an absolute sense of ownership and an absolute identity of interests. But it is bound by moral law, and familiarity may somewhat blunt its edge. So some teachers of Bhakti taught that romantic passionate love outside the marriage bonds represented the soul's longing for God more adequately. For here love does not obey any law outside itself. It is a sovereign and a law unto itself. The soul in the embrace of God is beyond all Dharmas.

It will be observed how brave and fearless in their quest of God the Hindu teachers are. They do not mind in the least the perils and the pitfalls of their quest. These daring souls leave to lesser men the task of inventing safeguards, erecting fences and thus protecting frail mortals who try to follow in their footsteps. The teachers of Advaita, for instance, take courage in both their hands and say, Thou art He—तत्त्वमसि. And the teachers of Bhakti with similar courage say that the soul's longing for God is not adequately represented by *Dasyabhava*, the attachment of the servant to the master, or by *Vatsalya-bhava*, the attachment of the parent to the child, or by *Kanta-bhava*, the attachment of the wife to the husband, but by *Mathura-bhava* the passionate romantic love outside the marriage bond symbolised by Radha-Krishna, though in all these cases absolute self-surrender is assumed on the part of the soul.

Let us now take stock of the situation created by this vast body of religious literature centering round Krishna in all the languages of India. There is no doubt whatever that by this means religion has been brought home to the masses. The religion

of love is an essentially democratic movement before which the rigidity of the caste system is bound to disappear. All the great teachers of Bhakti have taught that God was easily accessible to every man and woman without any distinction of caste, creed or colour. For instance the author of the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* says:—

नास्ति तेषु जाति विद्या–रूप:-कुल-धन-क्रियादि भेद: ॥

'Among the devotees of God there is no distinction of caste or culture, beauty or rank, wealth or profession.'

Also, wherever the religion of love spreads itself the weight of a complex ritualism is considerably lessened. Rites and ceremonies which tend to make religion mechanical and lifeless are bound to yield place to the simple religion of the heart. The same may be said of the difficult yogic practices which have an attraction for certain types of men. Yogic *asanas* and *pranayama* may have their place in religious *sadhana*, but they must yield precedence to love of God. And, finally, all metaphysical subtleties and philosophical discussion shrinks to their proper proportions in the presence of an overwhelming feeling for God. Thus the vast Bhakti movement of the Middle Ages in India breathed new life into religion and helped people to overcome to a certain extent the social, mechanical and intellectual obstacles in the way of true spirituality.

But the movement was not without its own drawbacks. Excessive emotionalism has its own dangers. Too often religious emotion is cultivated at the expense of the intellect. It is a sad sight to see the low intellectual level of some religious groups which are wedded to the school of Bhakti. Such groups invite the contempt of all sane-minded men and soon become the laughing-stock of the world. Also there are some adherents of the Bhakti schools who sing and dance and steep themselves in a slush of emotion so as to neglect their ordinary duties of life and become a source of annoyance to others. When the feeling of Bhakti is not properly balanced by Karma on one side and by Jnana on the other, as in the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is apt to degenerate into excessive and unhealthy emotionalism. Religion should not shriek at the top of its voice any more than it should become a lifeless routine or intellectual jugglery. It is at considerable peril to our minds that we cultivate one faculty to the exclusion of the other faculties. That is why a great scripture like the Gita always insists on the harmony of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. The ideal yogin whom it has in view is neither a mere ritualist, nor a mere emotionalist nor a mere intellectualist. We cannot say that the Bhakti schools of our Middle Ages have maintained the same balance and harmony in religious life.

Another danger which has to be guarded against in the religion of love is that what after all is only a mediate symbol might be taken for an ultimate reality. Krishna, the lover of transcendent beauty, to whom the soul surrenders itself in blissful rapture as to an earthly lover is after all only a powerful symbol of the infinite impersonal Absolute which is the ultimate reality. What Krishna is to one soul Rama may be to another soul, Karthikeya to a third and Jesus Christ to a fourth. These are all Ishta-devatas who symbolise for us in an agreeable form what is really Formless. A worshipper who places himself in the position of Radha and contemplates on Krishna should recognise a sister in the Christian nun who calls herself the bride of Christ. Both have the same method of approach to the Infinite and the Formless. But both must be constantly aware that the form they worship is only a symbol of something higher. Else they would not recognise each other as brother and sister, as pilgrims on the same road. And, what is more dangerous still, instead of earthly love leading to divine love, a reverse process might be set up and lead to gross animalism. Kama and Prema are two different things. The former is carnal love, the latter is spiritual love. Kama is mere desire for the temporary sheaths of the Self. Prema is love for the Self itself. The attraction that we finite selves feel towards one another and towards the infinite Self is the

attraction of the parts towards one another and towards the whole. The sundered spirit which is spread over the cosmos is trying to come back to its original wholeness and purity and is playing in that process this cosmic drama. And love is the force which is at the bottom of this process of integration. Love is eternal. That is why they say, God is love. The more we cultivate love in our hearts the more are we divine. Desire is a far inferior thing. It belongs to the flesh, not to the spirit. It is temporary and fleeting. It is of the earth, and is earthy in its nature. We are asked to renounce desire, but cultivate love. Unfortunately, the two are so closely connected together that the one is frequently mistaken for the other. Too often we find mere sensuality masquerading as spirituality. This is the greatest danger to which the religion of love is exposed. It is painful to see how some of the pages in the history of the Bhakti movement in India are disfigured by Prema degenerating into Kama, by religion being made a cloak for immorality.

Year after year in the month of Sravana we celebrate the birth of Sri Krishna from whom have flowed a thousand streams of love and spread themselves over the whole of India. But unless He takes birth in our own souls and progresses from stage to stage, marching from Brindavan to Mathura and from Mathura to Dwaraka, quelling the evil passions of our hearts, and taking us to the higher and yet higher levels of self-surrender, our religion cannot be said to become a live force binding us together and making us feel our unity in God

कृष्णात्परं किमपि तत्त्वमहं न जाने॥

SINNER'S FATE IN HINDUISM

By Dr. M. H. Syed, M. A., Ph. D., D. Litt.

One of the charges levelled against Hinduism by the Christian missionaries is that Hindu religion is so barren because unlike Christianity it holds out no hope or prospect of redemption for the sinners. They say that Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, sacrificed His life on the cross for the redemption of erring humanity and those who accept Him are saved from eternal hell once and for all; whereas Hinduism has no such prospects for any sinner, because it does not allow for forgiveness of sin. Thus the outlook for the sinners and for his future well-being in the life beyond is rather gloomy and cheerless.

A closer and deeper study of the fundamental principles of Higher Hinduism reveals that though there is no room for forgiveness of sin in its teachings yet they fill the heart of a sinner with dignified hope and confidence in the amelioration of his undesirable condition and the attaiment of perfectly moral life in course of time.

Whatever may be the cause of his sins, they can be exhausted and put an end to by suffering. Having suffered once and having paid all his Karmic debts in the form of sorrow and sufferings of every description here and hereafter, he becomes as pure as snow. He suffers because he sins, but deliverence from evil tendencies and vicious propensities is entirely in his own hands. However degraded and fallen a man may be, the moment he is awakened to his higher nature, the Blissful Self, learns to identify himself with it rather than with the form, he feels himself a better man and all his evil actions are burnt in the fire of wisdom. 'Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yet

shall thou cross over all sins by the raft of wisdom' (Gita IV. 36).

In considering the fate of sinners the first great truth which must never be forgotten is that the Divine nature resides in man. We may call that Divine nature by any name we choose,—God, Atman—its totality resides in man. In the wickedest sinner that Godhead resides in the innermost heart of his being, with as perfect a fulness of the Godhead as in the heart of the greatest saints. Brahman and pariah are equally divine; and the Brahman who spurns the pariah but spurns the Godhead dwelling in his own self. This is a well-known teaching of Vedanta. To find the God within is the sole task of human life and that Godhead is found equally in sinners as in saints.[1]

No man is born perfect. According to ancient Hindu religion every *jiva* has to tread the *Pravritti marga* before he returns Home through the *Nivritti marga*. During his wanderings in search of happiness he blunders, makes mistakes, commits sins and through prolonged suffering and sorrow learns the needed lesson of *vairagya*, dispassion and then at long last, establishes himself on the Path of Perfection and self-realisation. This law of human evolution is inevitable and no one can escape it. One who is called sinner today will become saint tomorrow. This does not seal the fate of any sinner. He has no reason to be downcast and dejected. He is the master of his destiny if he learns to make right choice now, and tries to improve himself through self-effort and the grace of a Sadguru if he is lucky enough to get one.

[1] *The God without and God within*: p. 20 by C. Jinarajadasa.

The ethical code of the Hindus lays it down as a rule that a man must endeavour to attain moral purity and then only does he become entitled to Guru's grace. It surely does not accept the theory which merely asks for grace without earnest and persistent effort for eradicating one's vicious tendencies. It is clearly indicated in ancient Hindu scriptures that grace does not serve as a means of removing sin without serious effort on the part of the sinner. Grace is invariably given according to the efforts made but in most cases the effort made is insufficient to obtain full grace.

There are two ways of expiation of a man's sins; the one has already been briefly referred to in the foregoing paragraph, namely, through the acquisition of wisdom and right understanding of his real inner nature. The other is through devotion to one's Ishtadeva. It is a well-known fact that the name of Hari is undoubtedly the surest and swiftest and yet the easiest means of expiating one's past sins. The greatest of sinners can attain the supreme abode of God through the blessings of the Name. But he who takes to sinful ways deliberately and with a firm resolve,on the strength of the Divine name, has little hope of deliverence.

The *Padma Purana* says, 'the sins of those who commit them on the strength of the Name, stick to them like a coating of adamant and cannot be washed out'.

It is true, as stated in the *Matsya Purana* that even those who are given to sinful ways and immoral practices are purified and liberated through repeated kirtans of Sri Hari's name. Thus we see that Hindu Faith, ancient or modern, does hold out as much hope of salvation to the sinners as Christianity itself.

IS HINDUISM ON THE DECLINE?

By Sri G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.

Of late, even the most ardent followers of Hinduism seem to feel that Hinduism is on the decline and the Hindu race is decadent. They raise the cry that the religion is in danger of being wiped out by the aggression of other communities. Some say that the Hindus have no communal consciousness and are being subjected to ignominy and contumelious condemnation and have no power of retaliation when their scriptures are held up to obloquy by merciless critics. Even granting, if not admitting, there is some justification for raising such a bogey, we feel that there is neither cause for panic nor reason for sorrow. While we are prepared to admit that the intentions of such pessimistic critics may be good, we feel that their zeal is misleading and the detractors of Hinduism will feel encouraged to create many more Miss Mayos and Beverley Nichols, the lineal descendants of Abbe Dubois. Strangely enough, some protagonists of the Hindu Mahasabha also seem to take delight in indulging in counsels of despair and laying the brushes thick on some of the 'weaker spots' of the 'body politic.'

To start with, let us realise that Hinduism is not a particular religion with a certain set of dogmas or beliefs but a civilization and a culture. It has within its fold numerous creeds and beliefs ranging from atheism and agnosticism to pantheism. One who has no belief in God, a Nastika and another who believes that 'God is All and all is God'—all go under the classification of Hindus. Besides, the history of that civilization goes back to thousands of years. Naturally then it is difficult even to frame an accurate definition of Hinduism. Such rare complexity and hoary antiquity combine in rendering the process of separating the chaff from the grain difficult, thus facilitating the process of making sweeping generalisations. If, by prestige and its loss by the Hindus were to mean the loss of political privileges, it may be true not only of the Hindus but almost of all the subject races who naturally develop 'inferiority complex' and suffer from many such disabilities. Why should the Hindus alone become the target of criticism? If the masses are sunk in poverty and ignorance, it is not the Hindus alone that are sharing this fate but the Indians as a whole suffer from economic distress. 'Hinduism as a religion' cannot be said to be the root-cause of this downfall.

Then again, the very fact that 'Hinduism' in all its various phases has shown remarkable vitality from the Vedic period down to the Vivekananda times is noteworthy. It has conquered the conquerors. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, the Theosophical Society, the Tagore School and other protestant or revivalist movements have actually 'invaded the Western continents' in thought. Philosophers like Emerson and Carlyle, Deussen and Schopenhauer, orientalists like Monier Williams, Max Muller and Wilson bear ample testimony to this 'spiritual conquest' of Hinduism. Let us not then despair of it. As long as the Hindu thought does not perish 'the race' will not and cannot perish. The truths embodied in the Sanatana Dharma are imperishable and invincible.

'There is no "Communal consciousness" among the Hindus' is another defect pointed out. If by this is meant that a feeling of exclusiveness should exist as a hand-maid of individuality, it stands in danger of breeding fanaticism which again is not desirable. Hindu religion never claims that it alone has the monopoly of truth. At the most it claims that the ideals of the Vedanta are the highest and the noblest. Human thought cannot go beyond that. If Sufism or Christian mysticism comes nearest to it, we have no quarrel with any. If, however, political privileges and official loaves and fishes are denied and economic freedom is not won, it cannot be the off-shoot of Hinduism. It is

not the particular religion that stands in the way of regaining these 'Paradise Lost.' Even Christians, Muslims and the Jews wherever they are subject-races, may not have the liberties, but that blame cannot be laid at the doors of religion. Loss of political power or the winning of economic freedom cannot be the result of the following of a particular creed. If that were so, can it be argued that a particular group by a wholesale conversion to another faith will attain political greatness? Mere arithmetical calculations, say the increase or the decrease of the followers of a particular creed, are not of vital importance. Besides the mere numbers there are other factors that count more heavily in such matters. Let us silently work for the amelioration of any group in matters economic and educational. When these levels rise, automatically other levels will rise.

When we say all this, we do not mean that amongst the Hindus now there is nothing that needs any reform and everything is alright with its followers. Certain institutions like the numerous sub-divisions and sub-castes should necessarily be re-formed to suit modern requirements. Even our Smritis have laid down that rules and regulations can undergo modifications. They are not like the laws of Medes unchangable. They are not static but dynamic. They are not rigid but progressive. If every Hindu, Muslim or Christian is true to his *faith* and does not hate his brother because he holds views other than his own but seeks points of agreement and not of divergence, we are sure matters will improve. The Vedas declare 'सहनाववतु, सहनौ भुनक्तु, सह वीर्यं करवावहै....माविद्विषावहै—' Let us protect ourselves together, and live together in peace and harmony.' If we take care of ourselves, Hinduism or for the matter of that, any 'ism' will take care of itself. There seems to be nothing wrong inherently in Hinduism as 'Hindu Dharma.' If there be any fear of Varnasamkara, it will be and is due to the actions of some of its followers perhaps. When that notable princess cried out, किं करोमि क्वगच्छामि वेदान् को उद्धरिष्यति Kumarila Bhatta replicd: माबिभेषि वरारोहे भट्टाचार्योस्ति भूतले 'Do not be afraid. Bhattacharya is alive'. So we have unbounded faith in our *Bhattacharyas of modern India.* Name them we shall not.

SAINT BULLA SHAH AND HIS VEDANTIC TEACHINGS

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

Sufism is the essence of Islam. It has the same philosophical foundation as the Vedanta. Sri Ramakrishna was initiated into Sufistic *sadhanas* by the great Sufi, Gobinda Rai and was blessed with the same spiritual realisations as those of Vedanta. Sufism has produced a multitude of saints in many provinces, particularly in the Punjab and Sind. Bulla Shah is one of the greatest Sufi saints ever born. The name of Bulla Shah is widely known in the Punjab. There the illiterate Jat peasant with a turban on the head and a stick in hand is walking the roads or working in the fields singing melodiously the *kafis* (verses) of Bulla Shah. Even the Hindu monks of Uttara Khanda memorise and recite the teachings of this Muslim saint as they are pregnant with the truths of Advaita Vedanta.

Bulla Shah was one of the disciples of the celebrated Sufi saint, Miyamir, who lived about three hundred years ago in a village three miles to the east of Lahore. Even to this day, this village is called Miyamirki Chhauni. (Chhauni means cantonment, and there is a government cantonment in the

village.) As a house-holder Bulla had plenty of wealth, honour and other equipments for worldly enjoyments. He was the Badshah (Nawab, Raja, King) of the town of Bulkh near Bukhara. But soon earthly pleasures lost all charm for him. He found them empty. They brought in their wake sorrow and pain. To him came the call of renunciation; he hungered for the contact and company of holy men. He heard from his ministers the sacred name of the saint Miyamir whose fame had then spread far and wide. He got anxious to meet the saint and have his blessings. So Bulla installed his young son on the throne and in the company of a faithful minister and about a hundred attendants left for Lahore. After a tedious journey for two long months he reached the cottage of Miyamir in a jungle in the village mentioned above. Through the fakir at the cottage door a request was sent to the saint praying for his darsan. The saint sent word that he cannot grant an interview to Badshah then. The Badshah was mortified at this but became more determined to meet the saint. He said to his retinue thus: 'Return home. I shall not enter into worldly life again. I am bent upon having eternal union with my heavenly Beloved. I shall surrender myself at the feet of this saint and follow the path of illumination according to his guidance.' So saying the Badshah distributed his wealth and all he had brought from his kingdom keeping only a blanket to warm his body in the ensuing severe winter.

The Badshah of the palace became a beggar of the street; the prince turned a pauper. The minister and the attendants reluctantly wended their steps towards Bulkh. Now Bulla in the guise of a homeless and penniless fakir approached Miyamir for his darsan but the latter still refused saying: 'Badshah, time is not yet opportune for our meeting. Go to another fakir who lives twenty miles away from here on the banks of the Ravi. Practise yogic penance under his gracious guidance for twelve years and then come to me.' Bulla obeyed the words of the master Miyamir willingly and found out the cottage of the fakir on the river banks. The fakir seeing Bulla from a distance recognised him and said, 'You are Badshah of Bulkh. Is it not?' Bullah said most respectfully, 'Yes; but how could you know and recognise me?" The fakir replied: 'The other day Miyamir Sahib told me that you would come to me on such a date and practise yoga here.' Delighted at the true prediction of Miyamir, Bulla prayed to the fakir with folded hands thus: 'Yes, I have been sent by Miyamir. Kindly accept me as your disciple and initiate me into yogic practices.' Bulla practised yoga for twelve long years under the directions of the fakir living on fruits, roots and milk. His body became emaciated; his physical grace disappeared and his hairs and nails grew long and were uncared for. When twelve years were completed, the fakir asked Bullāh to go to Miyamir for final initiation. When Bulla came to the cottage of Miyamir and asked for the interview, the doors were flung open and Miyamir smilingly received his disciple and talked to him kindly and cordially. Though Bulla's dress was dirty and his body unclean, his face shone with serenity and sanctity. The guru was then very glad to have his worthy disciple by his side, as he can hand over his spiritual wealth to him for the good of humanity. Spirituality is not airy nothing; it is something tangible and can be given by the illumined guru to the competent disciple like a flower. After the initiation and ordination of Bulla was over his guru said: 'You are now reborn. Hence you are renamed as Bulla Shah. Forget all your former name, position and family connections.' Bulla was blessed with the realisations of his illumined guru. He became a saint in possession of highest spiritual wisdom. His countenance now beemed with the lustre of divine light. His very presence now radiated peace and purity. His personality was grave but gracious to all. When the flowers blossom, the bees gather round in greed of honey instinctively. The blossomed flower of Bulla's realisations attracted devout men and women of different religions from far and near. His

teachings, full of fervour and flavour of Atmajnana spread throughout the province of the Punjab and became very popular. Since then for about three hundred years Bulla Shah's teachings have captured the imagination of the Punjabis and inspired them in their quest of truth. Bulla Shah is regarded today as one of the greatest saints of the Punjab by both Hindus and Muslims alike.

One day the Maulavis, the fanatic Muslim divines approached Bulla Shah and asked 'who are you?' The Sufi saint replied spontaneously in conformity with his highest realisation of 'Aual Haq': 'I am Khoda the great God (Reality).' The religious scruples of the Maulavis who were ignorant of spiritual experiences received a rude shock by the reply of this wandering saint. They arrested him and took him to the Muslim Nawab for trial and punishment for this unpardonable offence. The Nawab asked Bulla Shah the same question, 'who are you?' The Sufi saint said, 'I am a servant of God (Allah).' The Nawab finding no fault in the reply of the saint set him free. Bulla as before wandered from place to place enjoying the illusory fun of this world. But the anger of the Maulavis was not abated. On another occasion they put him the same question, 'who are you? and Bulla said in reply as before 'I am none other than Khoda.'. He was again caught for his offensive reply and taken to the Nawab. The Nawab asked him again 'who are you?' The saint Bulla replied, 'I am a servant of God.' The Nawab was a bit surprised at this reply; for the allegation against him was just the opposite. So he said to the saint thus: 'How is it that on the roads you say that you are Khoda Himself but before me you say that you are a devotee of Allah. Is it not falsehood? But a saint like you should not tell lies.' Bulla Shah replied: 'Nawab, I do not tell lies. When I am as free as air on the streets, scriptural injunctions have no hold on me as they cannot bind Khoda. So on the roads I look upon myself as Khoda as experiencing the highest ecstacy. But when I appear before you like a criminal caught and condemned I have no longer any freedom. I am no better than a servant. Hence before you I call myself a servant of Khoda.' This bold reply of Bulla Shah touched the heart of the Nawab who then with a respectful heart bowed to the saint and released him.

Bulla now began to proclaim himself as the Badshah. The Maulavis were again enraged and took Bulla to the Nawab with this complaint that this fakir used to call himself Khoda before but now he calls himself a Badshah (emperor). So he must be penalised. The Nawab interrogated Bulla Shah, 'If you are an emperor, where are your treasures?' Bulla said, 'The Badshah who has profuse expenditure must amass wealth. But I have no expense at all. The merciful Lord provides me with all my requirements even without my asking for them. Why should I then store wealth?' The Nawab again asked, 'If you are a Badshah where is your army?' Bulla Shah said, 'I have no enemy to fight with. Why should I then keep an army for nothing. Those who have enemies should maintain an army.' My empire of the Self is absolutely free from evils and enemies. He who rules as the all-powerful Emperor, the knower of Atman (self) and realises the cosmic phenomena as illusion is the real Badshah. Hence my emperorship is everlasting. It is never lost. But the emperorship of this earth is temporary and may go to-morrow.' The Nawab understood that this saint is above the dual throng of mundane existence. Hence he cannot be judged by earthly laws. Rules and regulations of human society can no longer bind him. Hence he was set free with this public declaration: 'None should obstruct the aimless wandering of this man of god from today. He who dares do so will be prosecuted and punished.'

The kafis (verses) composed by Bulla Shah are in the Punjabi language. The most popular of his verses is "CIHARFI" or thirty-lettered garland of verses. There are thirty letters in the Punjabi alphabet. The thirty verses each begin with a letter in order.

We give below the English rendering of a selected number of verses from the Garland.

1. My dear, first know thyself. First realise the true nature of your Self. As you are ignorant of your own Self you are drowned in the ocean of sorrows. Nothing short of the knowledge of Self can make you happy. None can ever be happy in other million means. Having learnt the mystery from all clever scholars of the earth, Bulla Shah addresses every man thus: 'My dear, the four Vedas and the Koran all declare that you are the embodiment of absolute bliss and knowledge.'

2. Closing your eyes and nose (i.e. all sense-organs) be seated in solitude and meditate on Absolute Reality. Give up desires as they make the mind outward. Realise the emptiness and illusoriness of this world. Conquest of mind is possible only by desirelessness. The intellect is the knower of the external world. But Atman illumines the intellect. That Atman is the immortal part of your being. Bulla Shah says: 'My friend, realise this mystery and pass time in peace.'

3. In your all-pervasive being there is not even the least perforation through which a blade of grass can enter. As one in sleep sees various dreams, so we see this cosmos on account of the nescience though it has never been created. Bulla Shah says: 'In the world within or without there is nothing other than your own being. Your self-imposed ignorance has kept you ignorant of this great secret.'

4. Meditate in your heart of hearts and experience that your being is the substratum of the cosmic illusion. It is through your being which is consciousness itself that others can know objects; otherwise no knowledge of objects is possible. As a boy is afraid of his own shadow, so you are bound by the phenomena which is nothing but the creations of your own desires. Bulla Shah says: 'Who binds the spider? It weaves a net and gets entangled in it. We create our own bondage and cry for release!'

5. It is a wonder that life is a pleasure to you and death a terror. But in fact life and death belong to the gross body, the mortal part of your being. But the immortal part of your being does not undergo any change by life or death. Your being is the life of all creatures. As the sky pervades all objects but remains unattached, so you being the life of the universe never depart from your nature in the least. There is nothing second or equal to or greater than you. You have neither origin nor end. You are Bliss absolute. Bulla Shah says: 'Mortality cannot touch your being. You are beyond time and space. Your being is ever immortal.'

6. Your desires are harassing you incessantly and have made you oblivious of your real being. You were the owner of your Atman-empire but your desires have deprived you of your empire and turned you a beggar. Your treasury is now empty. Your bonine being is enchained by the slender thread of desires. Bulla Shah says: 'See the fun! The ocean has been compressed in a small earthernpot! The sun of awareness of your eternal being will reveal its dazzling lustre as soon as the cloud of desires subsides.'

7. You are ignorant of the affairs of your own home. Being connected with desires, you have been transformed into them. Shake off the desires like dirt and dust and be desireless. When desirelessness is established, the seer within is revealed in its effulgent glory. A grassy field cannot conceal a lion long. Bulla Shah says: 'Sometimes it happens that having had the missing necklace in the neck, we search for it madly in the nook and corner of our house, though it is never lost. You have simply forgotten your real being and consequently been dropped in a well of miseries out of ignorance.'

8. Your luminous being is the revealer of the visible phenomena. Your being resides in all eyes as the seer. You are the witness of the three-fold states of waking, dream and sleep. But you are beyond these states. Bulla Shah says: 'Your being is ever-luminous and does not undergo any change in any place or time.'

9. Do not harbour any doubt regarding your Self. There is nothing other than your

Self in the universe. Know this for certain and be free. Accept a knower of reality as your guide and in no time you will be blessed with illumination. Walk steadily on the spiritual path in strict accordance with the teachings of the guru. Your eye of wisdom is covered with cataract. The eye will be cleansed by the remedy of the guru's teachings. Bulla Shah says: 'Ascertain your own being as ever free, pure and awakened and meditate on it.'

10. Cherish not even the slightest doubt that you are the owner of the universe. As a lion forgetting its own prowess keeps company with the goats and like them eats grass and bleats, so you have forgotten your real nature and are weeping like a helpless child. But as soon as the self-forgetful lion remembers its nature, it jumps out, roars and devours goats. Bulla Shah says: 'If you want to end your sufferings remember your infinite being.'

11. Alas! how ignorance has created this beautiful mirage of name and form. Dear friend, be the unattached witness of this cosmic sport and enjoy it. As the bubbles with variegated colours rise from water and are dissolved in it in a few moments, so the sky, earth, water, air and other elements are projected. They are momentary and will disappear soon. Bulla Shah says:- 'Clearly discriminate—to whom the sorrows and happiness of life belong—to mind or to Atman?'

12. As the mountain is not moved by storm, so is your Self by the stream of transmigration. The boys ignorantly imagine the moon to be moving along with the moving clouds. Yourself appears to be active being identified with the active sense-organs, body, mind, vital force, etc. Your being is the unmoved and unchanged witness of all movements. Bulla Shah says: 'By knowing your true Self, attain undiluted bliss. Know that this is the highest teaching illumined teachers will give to the worthy disciple.'

13. Liberation in life is attained by the grace of the Guru. All my actions are over. I am above joy and grief. All my ignorance has been dispelled. I have realised the supreme Self. Fear of death and the bond of the opposite pairs have left me. I have been saved and liberated by holy association. My being has transcended all conditions and limitations. I exist as joy in all creatures. Bulla Shah says: 'By means of discrimination I have become what I was originally.'

14. Dearest one, I have sold my little self and in exchange have got back my great Self. I have dropped all worldly knowledge and learning. I have burned to ashes all ideas of duality in the blazing fire of the knowledge of non-duality or oneness. No duty awaits me any more. I am the whole, the Infinite, the Absolute. I have got eternal rest and eternal leave. Bulla Shah says: 'I have put on the garland of everlasting peace and blessedness and am blessing myself."

THE NINE MEDITATIONS OF THE PRAPANNA

By Sri R. Tirunarayana Iyengar

Sri Lokacharya, the great Visishtadvaitic Acharya of the Thenkalai persuasion has made a masterly exposition of the doctrines of Visishtadvaita in his 18 Rahasyas in the form of aphorisms in Tamil. In the following paragraphs is incorporated the translation of one of the Rahasyas by name Navaratnamala, the nine-gemmed necklace. During the time of this Acharya there was a Mohamedan onslaught on Srirangam Temple. In his ripe old age Sri Lokacharya took charge of the sacred image of Sri Ranganatha and hurried away to a distant place of safety in the Hills and perished there.

Salvation or *moksha* for the finite soul is by the grace of God according to Visishtadvaita. A finite soul gaining *moksha* quits this world and approaches the Lord of Vaikunta. There it requests for, and is granted the privilege of rendering all kinds

of services to the Lord eternally and without intermission. This is its heaven, its bliss. There are two means of obtaining this salvation: one is *upasana* and the other is *prapatti*. *Upasana* is the observance of Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Though *upasana* depends on the grace of the Lord for its successful observance, it begins with self-effort and hence involves a certain amount of egoism though directed towards good ends. The *upasakas* are seekers of salvation by the road of works. But the *prapannas* are seekers of salvation by the road of faith and utter self-surrender. The *prapanna* with unflickering faith takes refuge at the lotus-feet of the Lord and prays that He should be the means of securing him salvation. The former is *sadhyopaya* (साद्ध्योपाय) and the latter is *siddhopaya* (सिद्धोपाय) or the ready means. The Alwars, and the Acharyas who followed them adopted and advocated the *siddhopaya*, for the reason that it affirmed the शेषत्वम्, (liegeship of the Lord) and पारतन्त्र्यम्, dependence on the Lord.

The nine meditations by which the *chetana* (finite being) becomes *prapanna* are stringed together by Sri Pillai Lokacharya into the *Navaratnamala*.

Firstly, he shall know himself as distinct from his body; as eternal with Eternal Divine Grace; as the immutable spirit-atom; as having knowledge and bliss which inhere in him as attributes; and as fit for devotion solely to God's service so that he cannot think or speak of anything else or have for his aim anything but God.

Secondly, he shall know his body as that which breeds notions that twist the truth and bar his knowing himself as he really is; as that which is made of the twenty-four categories of the mixed substance; as that which is mortal and ever changing, being a clog to him; as that which is never the seat of knowledge but which breeds endless woe; and as that which kills, showing sound and other sense-objects.

Thirdly, he shall know those who become *kin* through the flesh as ruiners of his knowledge of self, and of God, and of taste and haste in God-search; as fosterers of the mistake of the body for the soul, of the vanities attached to the self and what belongs to the self asserted by the terms 'I' and 'mine' and also lust, wrath and the like, and as brought by sin and leading to sin and grief.

Fourthly, he shall know those who like to wallow in the mire of birth and rebirth as foes to God-service and God-communion.

Fifthly, he shall regard gods other than the God of all as ignorant, impotent and as God-born and as holding posts given by God, now and then defying him through their pride, as bloated with the vain conceit of worth as misleading and as hurting the world.

Sixthly, they are entitled as 'Sri Vaishnavas' who through the Blest Universal Mother and through the Saints have known and joined the omnipresent Lord. These the *prapanna* shall know as fosterers of Godly wisdom, who abandoning all else loves God alone, and breathes for him as brethren in the Faith.

Seventhly, he shall think on his teacher thus:—'It is he who by his glance has reclaimed me, rendered me fit for God's acceptance, laid me at God's feet, taught me new truths and placed me in eternal debt, so that it is fit that I should ever serve him as my lord.

Eighthly, he shall know the Universal Queen thus:—'She checks our sins and the absoluteness of the Lord; stirs his mercy and love for the sinners; proves to us as Mediatrix—being the Mother, the lady and the goal of all cosmos.

Ninthly, he shall know the God of all as the Lord—who at creation, gave the body and the organs, who stands pervading and sustaining all; who makes hate to cease and love to spring; who radiates good and grants every other soul grace; who leads to the Good-Teacher; who forgives every sin of ours, who cuts the chain of births and deaths and who ushers him to God's path, to heaven, to the enjoyment of his blest qualities and to His eternal service throughout the life of the soul.

SEARCH AFTER REALITY ON THE EXTERNAL PLANE

By Swami Siddheswarananda

(Continued from August issue)

II

The fundamental concept of Vedanta is that the reality of the idea of existence is in ourselves and if we are to examine the present experience from the psychological point of view, we should search for that part of the experience which is real.

We thus find that (a) existence does not change and (b) that the content changes at every moment. The perception of the same object is never the same at two successive moments. One object is replaced by the perception of another. Say for example we may see a pot, then a chair, then a carpet and so on.

To avoid all confusion let us recall that the term perception applies to the relation that we establish with the objects of the external world and that the term 'apperception' is employed for the internal process.

Now, experiences follow in an unbroken chain. The content changes incessantly. That which remains without any change in any circumstance is the consciousness of existence.

The following discussion embodies the commentary in which Sankara defends the position of the Advaita against his opponents.

Sankara—The experience of the content is constantly changing. The idea of existence does not change.

Opponent—Your argument does not prove your point. For instance if a pot exists, the form of the pot also exists and if it does not exist, there is no existence at all.

Sankara—That is not the truth. If the content does not remain the same, that is to say, if the pot is destroyed the content becomes another pot or some other object.

Opponent—When the pot is absent and the consciousness of the pot also vanishes, the consciousness of existence also disappears thereby.

Sankara—No, because the consciousness of existence persists always in relation to another object; a cloth for instance.

Opponent—Like the consciousness of existence, the consciousness of the pot also arises in relation to another existing pot.

Sankara—You cannot say so, because the consciousness of the pot does not arise in connection with a cloth.

It is easy to recognize in this dialogue the arguments that the Buddhist scepticism raised against the synthetic spirit of the Vedanta.

We cannot but admit, that, in all experience, the consciousness of existence abides always as the constant. In these conditions how can we associate the idea of existence with that of the destroyed pot? At this point Sankara resorts to an application of the principles of grammar. According to the Vedanta, grammar is also one of the means which leads to truth. It throws into relief the relation that exists between the ideas and the forms of words by which the ideas are expressed. There is a relation between the idea and the form of an idea. Sankara invokes the aid of this grammatical principle to defend his philosophical position of relation that unites the *substantive* and the *attribute*, because we cannot in the example mentioned before, namely, that the pot is existing, separate the first from the second.

It will be well to remember in this connection that, according to the classical scheme, there exists an accidental relation (*Samyogasambandha*) between a unity and the basis to which that unity is linked, for example, the jug and the back of a mirror. Now, I can set aside that pot and place other things there, a seat, an arm-chair, etc. There will not be in this an indissoluble, essential relation; but relation is subject to change.

If on the contrary, the relation is a necessary one and not a contingent one, it cannot be changed. For example, the pencil and its form, the table and the wood, etc. Here is an indissoluble relation. (*Samavaya-sambandha*).

When we speak of the experience, of the reality of existence, the pot is the substantive (*viseshya*) and the existence is the attribute (*viseshana*).

That is not the same as the conflict between substance and accident, Nominalism and Realism that is found in the Europe of the Middle Ages. The substantive and the attribute in the above example, have a necessary relation (between each other) which does not change. The concept of existence is the attribute, the concept of the substantive is the passing basis (support). This support can be by turns a carpet, a jug, a chair, another jug, etc. Between the substantive (taken in the grammatical sense) and the attribute (existence), there is a constant relation. In each experience (that of the jug for example) there is a necessary relation between substance and existence, without which there can be no existence of anything. We cannot even affirm the existence of the subject.

Now, in this experience, we distinguish one part which changes always (the substantive) and another concept, that of existence (the attribute) that never changes. And Sankara concludes that there is here a constant relation.

Opponent—In the present case, how can you associate the consciousness of existence with that of the jug that has been destroyed?

Sankara—That is a sophism. There exists a constant relation between the substantive and the attribute; but if the substantive is absent, we cannot give any value to the attribute. Your argument, therefore, does not hold good.

One part of the experience is real; and that is the attribute, in other words, Pure Existence. Another is unreal and that is the substantive, the support. If everything is unreal, nothing in the world can be explained. We can now enunciate the following axiom: *The substantive generates a double consciousness; one real and another unreal.*

Sankara proceeds to the analysis of experience and shows that it is in some sense an illusion. The conclusions are:—(1) We have the perception of that illusion, which is like a mirage, (2) The illusion makes us believe that there really exists something, say for example, water. (3) We understand that it works up an illusion and (4) The vision of the mirage subsists nonetheless, even when we know that it is an illusion.

We see that one part of experience is illusory, but the idea of existence persists in all cases of the same species. It is thus that the entire universe presents itself before our eyes. Our life passes on. We recognize birth, disease and death; but every experience has got two phases (1) there exists something that is the true element, (2) with that something, which is the consciousness of existence, is associated an illusion, a mirage, that is the unreal element.

Sankara has taken up the same idea in the *Aparokshanubhuti*, verse 64 of which reads thus: 'In the same manner as clay appears under the name of the pot, or the thread under the name of the cloth, the Atman appears under the name of the Universe. Eliminate all the names. It is then only that you can know the Atman'.

If we analyse all the experiences of daily life, if we eliminate all that is passing, contingent (pleasure and pain, birth and death, etc.) we shall find at last an irreducible residue, an invariable and that is the pure consciousness, the existence, the *sat*, the Atman. Whatever be our experience we cannot negate that existence.

How can illusion be produced? How can the content be isolated from that in which it is contained? We identify ourselves in every circumstance with the body, with the jiva. It is ignorance which is the cause of that identification. From that originate all

the troubles, hopes, fears, etc. Consciousness thus identifies itself at all times with the unreal part.

The Reality is in the final analysis the *Sat.* It is not a question of belief, but of reasoning. *It is a fact of experience.* The spark of Immortality is in us and the argument of Sankara furnishss a scientific proof of that immortality.

When we understand the true nature of fear (or of all emotion) we perceive pure consciousness. The wave forms itself on the ocean. It has not, by itself, any value, because it does not exist in relation to the ocean. It is the same with everything that exists. Everything is or exists in relation to the reality. If it is not so, we will necessarily remain in ignorance and we can never get rid of it.

Also it will prevent us from recognising the fact that there can be many truths. In all our experiences, one element alone is true and it is that by which the totality is expressed and we really abide in that totality. The part that creates the multiplicity by means of the modifications (*vrittis*) is ignorance.

Sankara concludes thus: ' Know that which is true. You will not be conscious, then, of the different accidents of life, (birth, disease, death). You can even break the chain of causality.' In everyday life, it is causality which, from the religious point of view, turns the wheel of Samsara.

If we take a comprehensive view of all that changes (effect and cause) we see that there are two distinct categories of existence, *viz.*, the phenomenal and the noumenal. In both cases we remain always in the same *milieu of existence.* On the other hand, if we place the effect and the cause in two different categories, nothing can be explained. The effect and the cause are necessarily linked by the same milieu. If by an enlarged comprehension due to the illumination of Buddhi we succeed in associating the one with the other, we shall then perceive that the Atman which is the cause of the effect is always above the intellect. Only then can we truly know that all modifications proceed from one and the same cause and that the effect and the cause are in one and the same milieu.

Thenceforward, we perceive the necessary relation that unites the substantive and the attribute, the relation that binds the two elements is indissoluble. Nothing can break it. It is *unity* itself that is the cause of *diversity.* The man who attains to that state of consciousness is freed from all feelings of fear, nothing can trouble him. He understands that no one can kill and that no one can be killed. If he finds himself as Arjuna on a battlefield for defending his country and has to confront as enemies mighty persons like Duryodhana he will, from the spiritual point of view, see neither murderer nor victim, neither creation nor destruction. He will see only the Atman. The Atman alone is.

This is the reason why Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to fight, whereas, He advises Uddhava to meditate. These are only two different methods, appropriate to two different candidates, who are not on the same level of evolution.

Personality is a network of desires and desires constitute the tension of the ego. So long as we have not completely reduced that tension we shall not be able to understand the truth.

The Purushartha may be attained by each individual in his own particular way. It is thus that we can by following our particular path, gradually reach the same spiritual goal.

PRACTICAL ADVAITA

By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar

Practical Advaita stresses degrees of truth and goodness and the progression in knowledge or *jnana* till *jnana* transcends the subject-object relation and shines by itself. Pure Advaita employs the method of the logical and the psychological analysis of the Self and pure Practical Advaita accepts empirically the cosmological view and explains the relation between the *jiva* and *Iswara* in the light of the Illusion, Limitation and Phenomenon theories. Practical Advaita adopts the ethico-religious method and traces the development of the unitive consciousness till the sense of duality is self-transcended. It accepts the authority of the *Veda* in its threefold aspect of *Karma Kanda, Upasana Kanda* and *Jnana Kanda* and insists on the truth that the ethical performance of duty or *dharma*, the religious meditation on *Iswara* or *dhyana* and the philosophical knowledge of *nirguna* Brahman are not self-contradictory but continuous and complementary. The performance of *karma* is a preliminary stage to the awakening of the unitive consciousness and the worship of *Isvara* or the personal god is the way to Advaita, by the *sastraic* knowledge of the identity of *jiva* and *Iswara*. *Sastraic* knowledge is itself inferential and indirect and it is fulfilled in the immediate intuition of the self-identity of Brahman. This method may be called negation by fulfilment and it means that each stage when it is reached or fulfilled transcends itself and points to the higher stage. The lower is not transmuted or absorbed into the higher by the re-blending of material but it annuls itself in the very act of self-transcendence. It is the Advaitic faith that truth gets revealed by degrees until truth itself is revealed. There is no longer any going or goal and this faith is verified in Advaitic experience which is the one and only test of truth.

The performance of Vedic duties as prescribed in the *Karma Kanda* is preliminary to the awakening of Advaita *jnana* and it is a process of the purification of the mind. It is no doubt true that the action is the purport of the *Veda* and that the object of enquiry in the *Karma Kanda* is *dharma* or Vedic duty which ought to be done and that of the *Jnana Kanda* or the *Vedanta Sutra* is the ever existent Brahman. *Vedic* imperatives and *Vedantic* affirmations are therefore opposed as darkness and light. *Jnana* is not an end to be attained by effort nor an activity of the mind but is the knowledge of the self-realised Brahman. Brahman is not an object of injunction but is the eternal subject which never becomes the object. But there is really no discrepancy between *karma* and *jnana* as long as there is no awakening of the non-dual consciousness or *abheda-jnana*. The performance of *Vedic* duties like *yajna, dana* and *tapas* is helpful in acquiring *sabda jnana* of a *Mahavakya* like 'Thou art That' and awakening a thirst for *Brahma jijnasa* and *Brahma jnana*. While *kamya karma* or action according to inclination makes a man a slave of sensual objects and confounds his reason, *niskama karma* or performance of duty for duty's sake purifies the mind and makes it disinterested and detached. The *Karma Yogi* thus realises that the knowledge and performance of *dharma* yields only transient and perishing pleasures and becomes eager to know the non-dual Self and secure eternal bliss. *Karma* presupposes the distinction between the means and the end and between the doer and the deed and makes a man realise that the bliss which he seeks is not in the object or in the subject-object relation but is only in the pure non-dual subject. The utility of *karma* thus consists in knowing its futility and in the awakening of the desire for the absolutely accomplished Brahman. But as long as there is duality and dual consciousness, duty ought to be done in the interests of world welfare and as a worship of the Deity that is the real actor.

The next stage in spirituality is the passage from work to worship as described in the

Upasana Kanda and it consists in devout meditation of the personal god or god of religion as contrasted with the meditation on *nirguna* Brahman or the Absolute. God as *saguna* Brahman is the object of meditation (*dheya*) and is different from *nirguna* Brahman which is the eternal subject (*jneya*) of the *Sariraka Sastra*. Religious knowledge got by such meditation is higher than mere moral discipline or *karma vidya* and *Sastraic* knowledge, as it leads the *upasaka* to the path of Devayana. Brahman is *nirvisesa* and *niravayava* (indeterminate and formless) but it is conjoined with *maya* and is objectified and spatialised in the interests of devout meditation. The world of nature is external to the mind and not constructed by it. *Iswara* is entirely free from evil and other imperfections unlike the embodied *jiva* which is enveloped by *avidya* and He should be sought as the cosmic source and the eternal *saksin* of the phenomenal show. The *Upanishadic vidyas* or meditations on *saguna* Brahman may vary with the nature of the *upasaka* and the form and content of the *vidyas* but the different cognitions subserve the same end of God-realisation. *Vedanta* insists on the ceaseless meditation on God as the antecedent condition of the realisation of Brahman. But it applies only to the slow-minded *upasaka* who has to progress in knowledge step by step by ceaseless reflection and one-pointed meditation. The chief value of *upasana* is to show the futility of *Dvaita jnana* and point to self-enquiry as the true meaning of *bhakti*. In the case of the quick-witted person who has *Advaita-vasana* or is born with it all this elaborate moral and religious discipline is pre-supposed and he is supremely qualified to enquire into and intuit *nirguna* Brahman. He is a true *mumukshu* who thirsts for *mukti* and he has subtle *viveka*, *vairagya* and self-control. Knowing that Brahman or *atman* is real and *jagat* or non-self is false, he renounces all the desires for the pleasures of life here and hereafter and is firmly fixed in Advaitic faith.

The essential *sadhana* for attaining *atma-jnana* is however *vairagya* or renunciation of the non-self or objective consciousness, and renunciation and realisation are the negative and positive aspects of the same spiritual process. The *mumukshu* knows that *atman* is not the five *kosas*, the three bodies, the three *gunas*, the three states of consciousness and that it is *sat-chit-ananda* or existence, knowledge-bliss absolute. To apprehend being as such, the Hegelian method of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis should be reversed and the *mumukhsu* should go from synthesis which is the becoming of *samsara*, to the moment of antithesis which is the renunciation of the not-self or *unatma* to being as such which is Brahman. To comprehend the meaning of *cit*, he should transcend relational knowledge and know that the subject can never become an objective presentation or predicate and that the knower cannot be known. Relational knowledge is self contradictory and false and truth is a progression from the external relations to the internal relations and from internal relations to self-relation or identity consciousness. Sense-pleasures, inner happiness and the eternal bliss of Brahman differ in kind and the *mumukhsu* should reject the lower values and seek the highest. Duality and non-duality are polar opposites and the *mumukhsu* should go from *karma* and *dhyana* to *jnana* and go beyond the relativity of good and evil and the worshipper and the worshipped. The two ways, *pravritti* and *nivritti* or secular and spiritual modes of life are incompatible as no man can serve god and mammon and sex at once. The *mumukhsu* should renounce the world and the more the life of *sanyasa* the more is spirituality. In this way he reflects on the confusions and sorrows of the divided life or duality and yearns for the absolute which is his true nature. By denying every empirical experience given in sense-perception, reasoning and dualistic scriptural texts he realises *nirguna* Brahman or *atman* as implied in the *Mahavakya* 'Thou art That.' By denying the false and renouncing the empirical and contingent he affirms truth and attains eternal life or *mukti*.

To the middling type of the *mumukhsu* whose mind is not completely freed from the evils and illusions of *mala*, *vikshepa* and *avarana*, there is a progression in knowledge starting with *karma-upasana* and ending in *jnana* and it itself admits of two stages, *paroksha* and *aparoksha* or the intellectual and the intuitional. Owing to the grace of *guru* and God (who are *karya* and *karana guru* in one) he discerns the implied meaning of the *Mahavakya* 'Thou art That' in the light of the grammatical rule known as *jahadajahad lakshana*. 'That' refers to *Isvara* or Brahman reflected in *maya* and 'Thou', to the *jiva* or Brahman reflected in *avidya* and owing to *adhyasa* or super-imposition there arises the self-contradiction between the omniscience and omnipotence of *Isvara* and the ignorance and impotence of the *jiva*. By removing this contradiction arising from the sense of duality, the absolute identity of *Isvara* and *jiva* as Brahman is established as in the case of personal identity implied in the proposition 'This is that Devadatta.' At first this knowledge is only *paroksha* or mediate or intellectual and gradually it becomes immediate intuitive experience or *aparoksha jnana*. Advaitic thought leads to and expires in the bliss of *anubhavadvaita*. In that super-conscious state called *nirvikalpa samadhi* all duality and difference vanish and Brahman shines by itself as the one without a second, as existence-knowledge-bliss absolute. The *mumukshu* now becomes a *jivanmukta* who realises that he is Brahman and has practically transcended all stages of relational or conditioned thought and is Infinite bliss. In that super-conscious state there is no longer any distinction of knower, actor or enjoyer of bondage and *mukti* of progression and attainment of Brahman and *maya*, Dvaita and Advaita. Even *aparoksha jnana* admits of stages of self-transcendence like those of *Brahmavid*, *Brahmavara*, *Brahmavariya* and *Brahmavarishta*. Like the arrow shot at an object, the body caused by *prarabdha karma* has its effect and persists even after *jnana*. But one who is absorbed in *Brahma jnana* is not affected by any kind of *karma* just as a man who awakes from dreams is not affected by the unreal objects of the dream state. If the *mukta* descends to the *vyavaharic* plane or the world of relativity, he is not in any way touched or tainted by any bodily attachment and *Iswara* works through him in the interests of world welfare and *sarva mukti*. Death is the end of the whole drama and the dissolution of the body means *videhamukti* and the realisation of the state of *turiyatita*. What is is and what is not is not. Brahman is and the *jagat* is not.

The term *maya* may be interpreted from three standpoints in the light of Practical Advaita and the theory of the progression in knowledge, namely, the ethical, the metaphysical and the intuitional. According to the first view, *maya* refers to the evanescence of life like the ripples in a river. As Sankara observes in a *stotra* to Siva, life perishes daily before our very eyes, youth passes away, days never come back. Time consumes all things, fortune is as transient as the ripples on the waves of the ocean and life is fleeting like the lightning. When the philosopher reflects on these passing shows of being, he concludes that life is self-contradictory and *maya* in the second sense refers to the contradiction between reality and appearance. Every category of thought like space, time, cause and self appears to be real and is not real. *Maya* is a frank statement of the fissure between the noumenal and the phenomenal. It is impossible to say whether the world is real, unreal or both real and unreal and it is like the riddle that arises when the rope is mistaken for the snake. When the philosopher changes into a *jivanmukta* the whole riddle is dissolved and then Brahman is and the world is naught or *tuccha*. What is is and what is naught is *maya*. In the ethical stage, the *mumukshu* is a *karma yogin* and an *upasaka*, in the metaphysical aspect he takes to *vichara* and reflecting on the meaning of the monistic texts knows that the self becomes the non-self though it cannot be the non-self; and in the *anubhava* stage he intuits that he is Brahman. Then he goes beyond all standpoints and stages and dialectics and counter-dialectics and is knowledge-bliss-absolute.

CULTURE AS DEEP AS LIFE

With out-stretched hands and loud professions of love civilization has wooed culture; but culture has evaded civilization's grasp and turned her back on him. And why? Because civilization has been rude and arrogant in his 'advances'; how can culture, mild and mellow, coy but poised tolerate such behaviour? 'None but the refined deserve the fair' sang the poet. With refinement of mind and manners, with chaste tastes and mellow mein culture should be approached if we are to merit her glances. Another 'no' from culture would be the last calamity for our civilization. Who will avert the catastrophe? The youth of the nation still in their bloom can easily earn the above ornaments, adorn themselves and make sure to win the hands of culture. Hence the call of Justice Lakshmana Rao at the convocation to the outgoing graduates of the Madras University to cultivate the refinement of mind and manners is a timely and necessary one.

Unerringly the Justice placed his finger on the *whole* of culture when he said that, the ability to see the other man's point of view, the absence of intellectual arrogance, the thirst for knowledge for its own sake, the attitude towards others that could never be construed as offensive in words, gestures or deeds and above all a sense of humour, that is, the ability to laugh at one's own faults and idiosyncracies, are the qualities of a cultured mind.

If one word can hit off the modern temper and conduct it is 'self-righteousness.' We have learnt to force our own views on others as an art. Where is the place for other's views at all? 'The human desire to see only one phase of truth, which we happen to perceive and to develop and elevate into a perfect logical system is one reason why our philosophy is bound to grow stranger to life.' Significant words these from Lin Yutang. We are partial to our partial visions, partial to ourselves. And culture demands of us impartiality, a whole and total vision!

Culture asks of us something more. For culture is the passion for sweetness and light, for the eternal *not ourselves* which makes for happiness. We have to seek this *eternal not ourselves* in the service of others and sacrifice thereto. 'Your university,' concluded the speaker, 'also expects of you a 'spirit of service. It has been dinned into our ears that ours is a land of poverty, illiteracy and disease. It is your duty to take a leading part in eradicating these three pests. Ours is a country in which have lived saints and sages, who have all taught the gospel of selflessness and social service. I would therefore, ask you to follow the ideal of service and sacrifice in whatever walks of life you find yourselves placed. The country and the people at large look to you to take the lead in all movements of social reform.' Here is an exhortation to cultivate a culture as deep as Education or an Education as wide as culture.

Studies in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy: BY S. K. MAITRA. PUBLISHED BY THE BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY. PAGES 160. PRICE Rs. 3/-

The rainbow is brilliant without a comment, and may seem as having in it something new and different from the tame light of the sun to undiscerning eyes. But let the rainbow think twice or even thrice before it stands up to claim a 'newness' that is not in the leading luminary of the heavens; for that would be nothing short of laying the axe to its own roots. Those new brilliant births in India's 'philosophical family' will do well to look at the rainbow and learn when they feel like disclaiming the parent perennial philosophy.

From the prism-like genius of Sri Aurobindo the light of India's perennial philosophy emerges in brilliant colours. Who can doubt its brilliance? none—though many may doubt its 'newness'—none who had occasion to turn to his *Life Divine,* where this brilliance is in full focuss. The present *Studies* is an appetiser that makes one ask for more and more of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

Dr. Maitra takes up and examines the fundamentals of philosophy, Reality, Self and the World in the light of Sri Aurobindo's viewpoint and he has already constructed Sri Aurobindo's philosophy: In the first chapter, a comparative study of Aurobindo and Bergson, he considers Reality. 'Motion which we may also call Becoming, gives in Bergson's view, the true picture of Reality. But Sri Aurobindo does not identify Reality either with Being or Becoming, but looks upon both of these as poises of Reality. In reality, the Absolute is beyond Being and Becoming. But as we cannot conceive the Absolute in itself, in its true condition, we must, he says, accept the double fact, admit both Shiva and Kali.................. *(Life Divine)* p. 19.

But how to climb down from Reality to self, the second corner-stone of philosophy. Intuition is the bridge, say *the East* and the West with one voice. Here again there is bound to be a concurrence between Bergson and Aurobindo; only the latter at a stage leaves Bergson and travels farther. 'Bergson has huddled together all higher forms of consciousness under the single term "Intuition". Sri Aurobindo on the other hand has distinguished five levels of consciousness above the mental, namely, the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, Intuition, Over Mind and Super Mind.' The subtle differences which Sri Aurobindo makes between these intuitive levels are explained by Dr. Maitra in another chapter. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, 'the Overmind though the highest power is of the lower hemisphere. It fails to lead mind beyond itself and in this world of original Inconscience it cannot dynamise the transcendence. This transformation is achieved by the supermind for which the whole universe is waiting.' Man by the power of this transformed Supermind will charge this world with divinity and transform it. Thus we come to the third category, the world.

According to Sri Aurobindo the destiny of man is to be more than man and the destiny of the world is to be more than the world. The world will be transformed into a family of Supermen, a society of gnostic beings. So if from Reality to man is a descent, from man to Superman is an ascent. In the celebrated words of Sri Aurobindo, 'the evolution of man is not merely an ascent from the lower to the higher stage, but it is equally a descent to the lower stages and an integration of the higher with the lower, of the Divine with the human.' Here is a promise rosy enough for man even of the lowest rung of evolution. Through this hopeful gospel Sri Aurobindo preaches his Religion of the Superman which he avers, is bound to be the Religion of the Future. 'For the sheer joy of existence the Superman links himself with others, nay with the whole of creation. All sense of effort vanishes from him, all consciousness of duty.........How can there be any room for sorrow or delusion, for these are the outcome of a sense of division.'

In this twin process of Ascent and Descent which summarises Sri Aurobindo's evolution, we cannot afford to miss the eloquent echoe of Visishtadvaitic wisdom, the *Paratva* and *Saulabhya* aspects of God. *God though very far from us (para)* comes down to us as a divine friend, in a descent, and not only makes himself *sulabha,* easily available, but lifts us to his heights, in an ascent and thus completes the evolution. The rainbow is brilliant; but all the more it declares its debt to the white tame light.

While the other chapters have constructed Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, the chapter on 'Evil' puts up an able and necessary defence of the structure. It has been alleged by western thinkers that the weakest link in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy (as in all Eastern philosophy) is its inadequate treatment of the problem of Evil. Dr. Maitra has taken up this challenge and in a scholarly and well-thought-out article proved that the charge recoils on the West like a boomerang. The West so long as it retains an extra cosmic God cannot steer clear of the vicious circle of an inherently evil world trying to evolve with the help of God.

Evil, says Indian wisdom is less evolved good. Evil and pain again, are due to ignorance of our true, good and invulnerable nature. They result from a self-imposed limitation, from the self-assertiveness of the *imperium in imperio* we have set up. Sri Aurobindo takes the same view—only he calls it by a different name, Egoism. If the egoism vanishes into the awareness of the All-all evil and pain take to their wings. God, the Intelligent Principle cannot create, if at all he creates, an evil world: the world being an overflow of his abundance can only be good and intelligent. This is the voice of Advaita, and Sri Aurobindo's voice sounds like an echoe: He calls the world, pure Lila of the Lord, an expression of his spontaneity. (p. 114.)

The 'Status of Man' a paper which the author contributed to *Advent* rounds off this illuminating study of one of the great creative minds of modern India.

Among the Great: BY DILIP KUMAR ROY. WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN. NALANDA PUBLICATIONS, VORA & CO., 3, ROUND BUILDINGS, BOMBAY 2. PAGES 330. PRICE Rs 10.

Sri Dilip Kumar Roy who has sung for us in his inimitable way some of those immortal songs now writes or rather sings of five Great Men he had met, Romain Rolland, Mahatma Gandhi, Bertrand Russell, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Here, as in other places, Mr. Roy is in the role of a pilgrim-minstrel. Like Shelly's Skylark he sings and soars: he sings and soars up the current of these five great rivers, gathers the limpid waters of life from their very source and gives it to the world with all the grace and generosity of the artist, with the moral concern of the mystic. That the accounts given are more than reports of the author's interviews with these celebrities, that they are 'living philosophies' which will give the reader a new perspective of life and its possibilities is attested to by Sir Radhakrishnan: 'The choice spirits whose considered convictions on many matters of vital interest and urgency are set forth in this volume, are men of deep humility and profound insight, who are released from sectional views and have won through to illimitable horizons. They have wrestled with the central problems of life and reached decisive certainties.'

All sorts of topics are discussed in these pages from birth-control to Brahman. But the artist *par excellence* that is Dilip Kumar stands out in every page so that by a mutual resonant 'sympathy' he draws out the artist in those choice spirits. And when the flood of the warm effusions and exchanges between the author and the Greats, has rolled away, a careful reader gets busy collecting the 'bricks' brought down and scattered by the flood and building an edifice of art after the hearts of the Greats. What a variety of colourful and picturesque bricks! From the almost religious seriousness of Rolland who felt so deeply about art as to think that it must in its very nature demand the life blood of the artist, to the art *qua* yoga credo of Sri Aurobindo. All speak with one voice that art to be art must *beautify* Life first and Life's things next. Let us linger awhile on the artistic credo of these great men:

In a context the author impeaches Mahatma Gandhi for his animosity for pictures on walls to which the latter replies: 'I need no inspiration other than Nature's. What need have I for the childish colour-schemes of humans? Beside God's handiwork does not Man's fade into insignificance? And—to be more concrete—tell me Dilip, how can Art be so thrilling, after all, when Nature, the mightiest artist, is there to cater for us?' To Tagore maintenance of the chastity of his virgin emotions is the supreme function of the artist. The artist in Bertrand Russell seeks a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure of joy and hope, based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. And lastly comes Sri Aurobindo who holds that Art, poetry and music are not yoga, not in themselves things spiritual, but they can be turned to a higher end and can be admitted as part of a life of yoga. Is there not enough here that will inspire anyone by a sublime sense of artistic *ought* so necessary in these days of self-righteous aggressive artistic *is*?

Perhaps some may question the wisdom of grouping together these greats? Rolland and Tagore are artists no doubt. But Gandhi is a political mystic, Russell a philosophico-sceptical-mystic and Aurobindo a mystic *cum* mystic. Has not the author gone in for an over-balance of mysticism than of art? He has, rather he must. Sri Aurobindo, the great mystic, is his guru, the goal of all his art and it is not by accident that he comes as the coping stone in the volume. The author's deepest preference for Sri Aurobindo is in itself a substantial earnest of his mystical *forte* which gives the sanction and sustenance to his artistic life. Gandhiji put the whole truth in simpler language when he said that the greatest artist is he who lives the finest life.

If the book is supremely interesting from cover to cover it is not the fault of Dilip Roy. Neither is it the fault of the greats who live and give their message whether interesting or not.

Iswaradarshanam or Tapovana charitam ; I Part: (SANSKRIT) BY SRI SWAMI TAPOVANAM. COPIES CAN BE HAD OF SWAMI GOVINDA GIRI, SRI TAPOVANA KUTEE. P. O., UTTAR KASHI, TEHRI, GARHWAL, HIMALAYAS. PAGES 108, PRICE RS. 2.

The present work in prose and verse is the story of the life and realizations of Sri Swami Tapovanam written in all objectivity by the Swami himself. We had occasion to notice in the columns of our magazine the Swami's *Saumya Kasisasthava* and other beautiful works in Sanskrit. The book before us is written in flawless and charming verse and prose, in a style suited to the dignity of the subject-matter.

The Swami is not only a profound scholar in the Sastras and other scriptures but also a practical mystic who has spent several years of contemplation and reflection in the divine solitude of the Himalayas. We daresay all those who are interested in Sanskrit religious literature especially in the revival of the divine tongue in the present age will welcome this work both for the elevating matter it contains and the sweet manner in which it is presented.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE MURALIDHAR AT THE MATH

The Sweet Bright Boy of Brindavan, the thief of the Gopis' hearts, was again at the Math on his yearly rounds and his visit was the occasion for joy and ceremony. On the 31st of August special puja and Homam were offered to him and devotees partook of his prasadam.

On the succeeding Sunday, 2nd of September, a meeting was convened in the evening at the Math Hall when speakers approached the central theme of his life, Love, from different angles. Rao Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri saw Sri Krishna as Lilasuka saw him in his famous work *Sri Krishna Karnamrita*. The speaker said that the Lord out of love for humanity came down to us as a friend (*Suhrit*), and lifted us to his level and thus exemplified in his life the godly qualities of *paratva* and *saulabhya*. Prof. D. S. Sarma (the text of whose speech) appears elsewhere in this issue, speaking next, observed that from Sri Krishna had flowed down a mighty river of Love that swelled and flooded our country by various branches for a period of twenty centuries from the *Chandogya Upanishad* to Chaitanya Deva. Swami Aseshananda saw in the Cowboy of Gokul, the prophet of humanity, for in him was combined not only the God of Love, but the hero of action. The function came to a close with *arati*.

NEW TEMPLE AND WELFARE HALL FOR RAMAKRISHNAPURAM

The Ramakrishna Mission formed the Ramakrishnapuram Colony in the year 1928, with the help of the Government. Since then the Ramakrishna Thondar Sangham under the guidance of a Swami of the Order has been conducting social welfare work there.

The colony was the scene of *eclat* and big gatherings on Sunday, the 9th of September when the opening of the Welfare Hall and the installation ceremony in the Temple attached to it came off with all solemnity. In the morning the likeness of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was installed in the temple with the usual rites of Homam by the Swamis of the Math. In the evening the hall was packed to capacity when a public meeting was convened, Sri C. Rajagopalachariar presiding.

The chairman in a interesting speech referred in high terms to the Mission's humanitarian activities and advised the residents of the colony to put forth all effort to keep the temple and the hall perfectly clean. Sri P. N. Srinivasachariar also spoke. The function terminated with thanksgiving and *arati*.

TWO HOSPITALS OF THE MISSION

Home of Service, Benares

The Indoor General Hospital with 115 beds admitted during the year 2,051 cases of which 1,433 were cured and discharged. The daily average attendance was 95.

The Refuge for Invalids—The male section kept only 5 permanent inmates during the year due to paucity of funds while the Women's Section kept 19

The Lachmi Narain Trust for paralytic patients treated 11 cases and the Chandri Bibi Fund gave shelter and food to 227 men and women.

The Outdoor Dispensaries treated 84,698 cases. 178 persons mostly from respectable families received monthly outdoor relief and the total expenditure incurred was Rs 4,448-9-3 Special and occasional relief to students and travellers as also Distress relief to migrated destitutes from Bengal were also given.

The total receipts for the year was Rs. 58,121-1-11 and expenditure Rs. 57,153-1-6.

SEVASHRAMA—BRINDAVAN, MUTTRA, U. P.

Indoor General Hospital with 55 beds admitted during the year 1,453 cases of which 1,301 were cured and discharged.

Indoor Eye Department-Due to the benevolence of Sri Nandababa, an eye clinic which has been a long felt need of the locality has become an accomplished fact.

The Outdoor Dispensary treated 24,327 as against 20,946 of the last year.

Outdoor help was given to 63 persons in cash and kind.

The financial position of the Sevashrama was never satisfactory. The total receipts for the year amounted to Rs. 59,174-1-3 and total expenditure under different heads came to Rs. 38,081-12-0.

A female ward, Workers' Quarters, Doctors, Quarters, Laboratory and X-Ray installation seem to be the immediate needs of the Sevashrama.

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